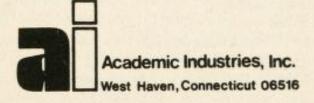


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Edgar Allan Poe

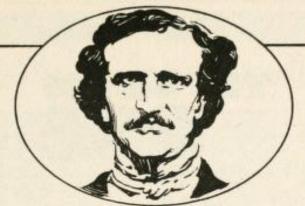


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### about the author

Edgar Allan Poe was born in 1809 in Boston, Massachusetts. Left an orphan at the age of two, he was adopted in 1811 by his uncle, John Allan of Richmond, Virginia. He entered the University of Virginia, but left because he was always drinking and gambling rather than studying. He was later dismissed from West Point for repeatedly breaking the rules. When John Allan died in 1834, Poe was left penniless and rejected.

In 1836 Poe married his thirteen-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm. Their life was hard, since Poe made very little money from his writing. When Virginia died in 1847, Poe began to drink and gamble more than ever, causing him to live in constant misery. His short stories, however, were becoming popular—even in Europe, where they were translated into French by such writers as Baudelaire and Mallarmé.

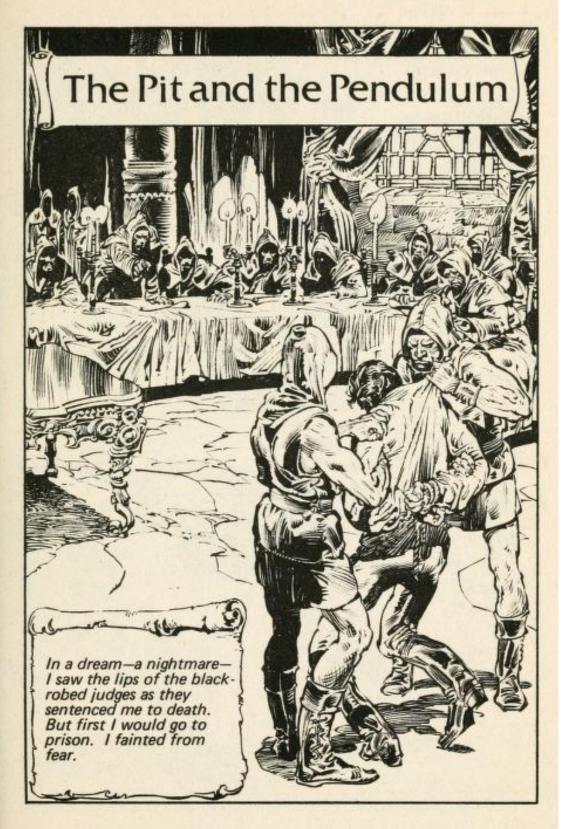
Throughout his career, Poe suffered long periods of sickness bordering on insanity. This and his continual drinking made him often fear that he was losing his mind entirely. The end came in 1849 when he was found dying in a Baltimore gutter. Edgar Allan Poe was one of the most misunderstood men of his time—but he was also one of America's greatest short story writers.

### Edgar Allan Poe

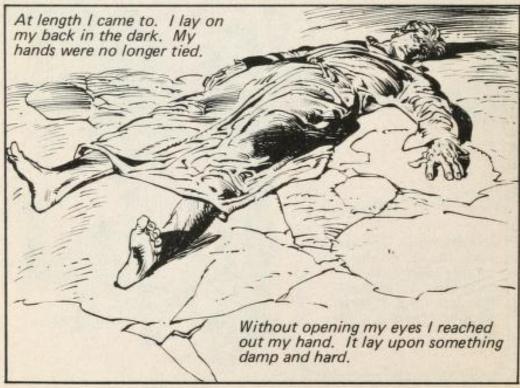
# The Best Of POE



The Pit and the Pendulum
The Fall of the House of Usher
The Cask of Amontillado
The Murders in the Rue Morgue







I was afraid to open my eyes, afraid that I would see—nothing! I tried, and it was so! There was only the dark.



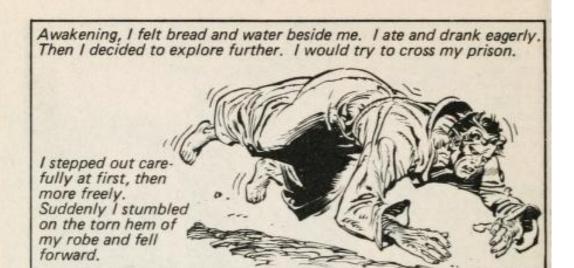


At length my hands found a wall, smooth, slimy, and cold. I walked around it trying to figure out the size of my prison.

The ground was slippery. Soon I stumbled and fell.







I lay on my face. My chin rested on the prison floor. But from my lips up, my head touched nothing!



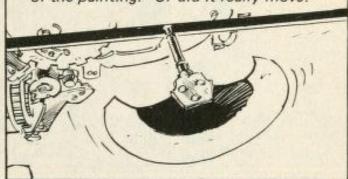




Above me on the high ceiling was painted a figure of old Father Time, with a clock's pendulum in place of his scythe.

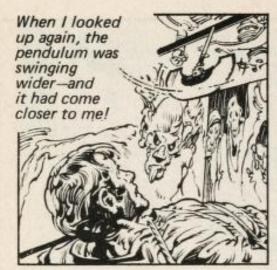


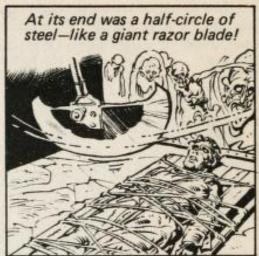
Was the pendulum, as I first thought, part of the painting? Or did it really move?



A slight noise made me turn my head. Looking at the floor, I saw troops of large rats coming from the pit. They were after some meat that had been left beside me.







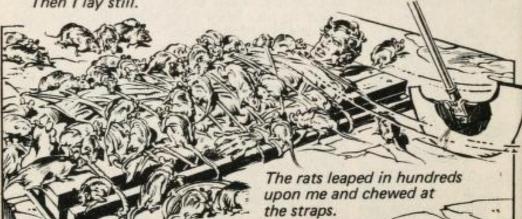
For hours-perhaps days-I watched in terror as it swung above me:







And then, almost too late, I began to think. I reached for the remains of the meat and rubbed the straps that were holding me. Then I lay still.





Then the pendulum stopped. It was drawn up to the ceiling. But the metal walls began to glow with heat!

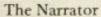






## The Fall of the House of Usher



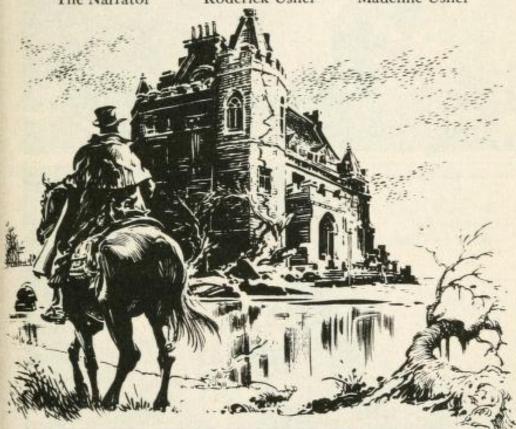




Roderick Usher



Madeline Usher



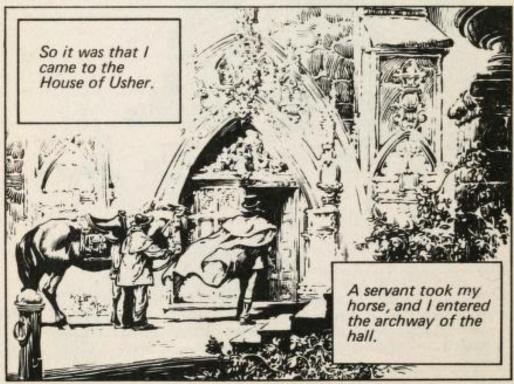
During the whole of a dark autumn day I had been riding alone through the dreary countryside. I found myself, at evening, near the gloomy old House of Usher. As soon as I saw it, my spirit was struck with sorrow.

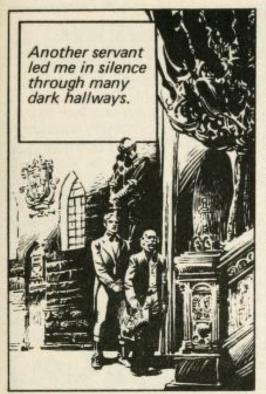


He suffers from a great illness and a mental problem as well. He wishes my company, as his oldest friend, to cheer him . . .



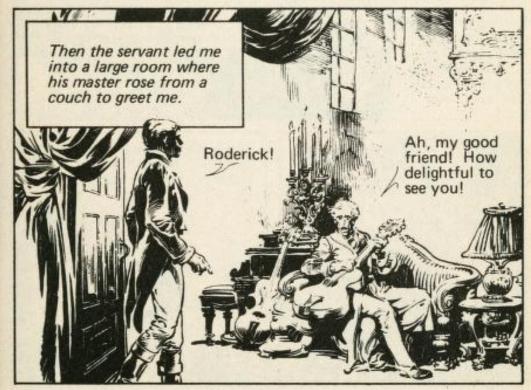






On a staircase we met the family doctor. I did not like his look of fear.







Most of all I fear . . . not danger . . . but the slightest thing which will upset my soul! Sooner or later I will lose life and reason together, fighting fear itself!



But much of his sorrow could be traced to the terrible illness of his beloved sister, who was slowly dying.



She has been my only companion for years. Her death will make me the last of the Ushers!







For several days I tried to make my friend happy again.









We carried the body to a vault deep beneath the cellars of the house.



Our torches kept going out because there was so little air in the passageway.







Days of sorrow brought changes in my friend. He roamed from room to room as if he were lost. He stared into space for long hours, as if listening to some sound that was not there.

I felt myself grow frightened at his terror. One night I rose, dressed, and paced the floor, unable to sleep.





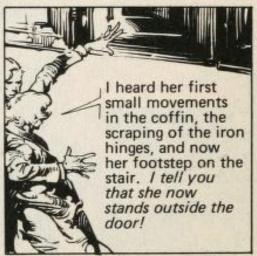




Yet from a distant part of the building, there had come a cracking, ripping noise.





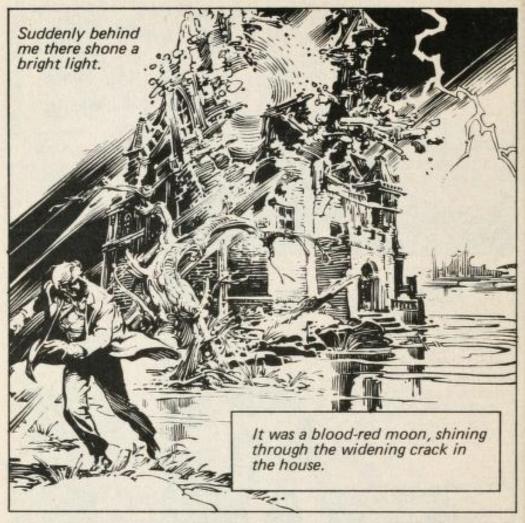






I fled from the house, out across the bridge and into the storm.



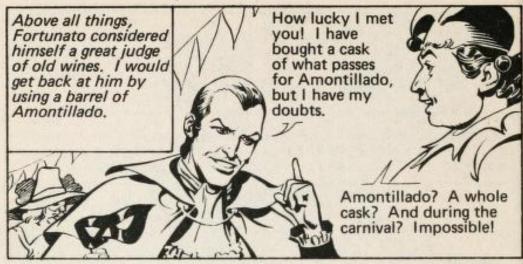




# The Cask of Amontillado

Fortunato had harmed me a thousand times. But when he insulted me also, I swore to get even with him. I would kill him—and I would get away with it! Meanwhile, I let him think he was my good friend.





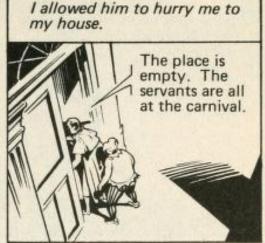


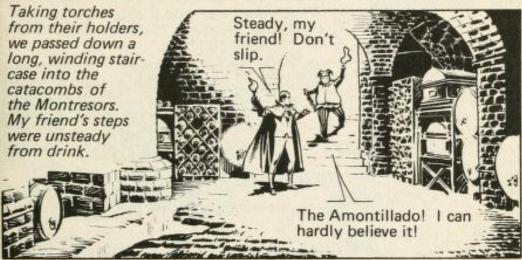
I am on my way to Luchesi. He knows wines. He will tell me . . .



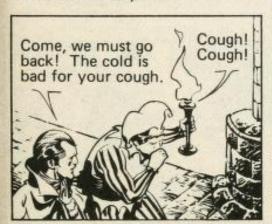


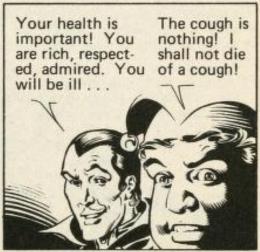


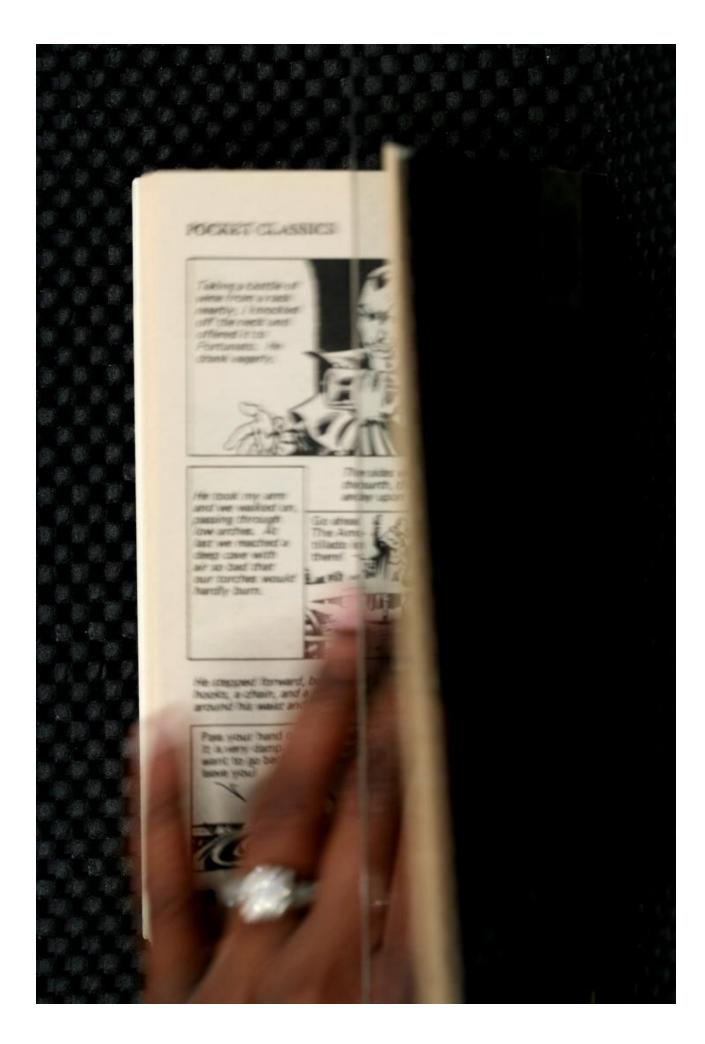


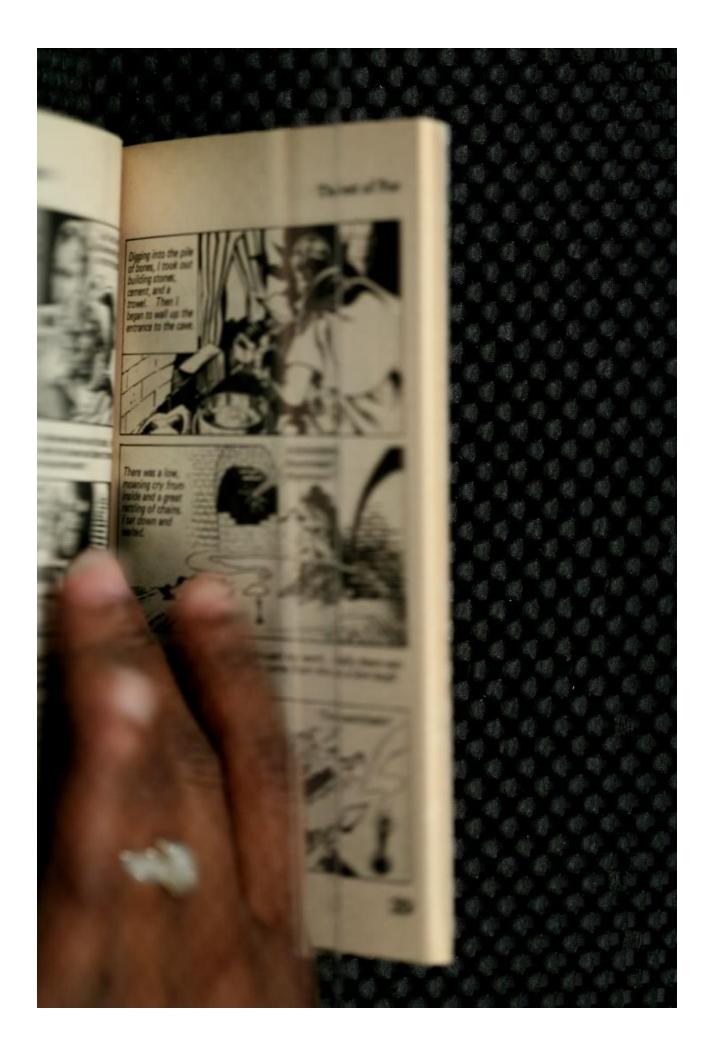


Soon a coughing spell forced Fortunato to stop.









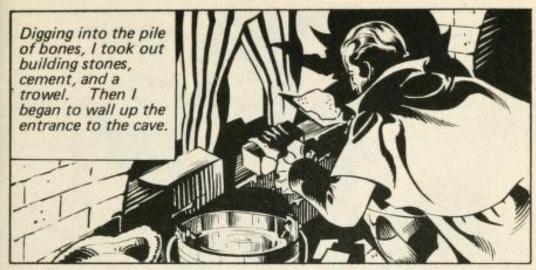


He took my arm and we walked on, passing through low arches. At last we reached a deep cave with air so bad that our torches would hardly burn. Three sides were lined with bodies. From the fourth, the bones had been thrown down and lay upon the earth.



He stepped forward, but stopped at the rock wall. In it were two iron hooks, a chain, and a padlock. In a second I had wrapped the chain around his waist and fastened him there.







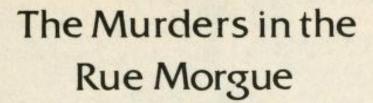
At last the clanking stopped. I continued my work. Finally there was only one stone to be fitted in. There came from the cave a low laugh and a sad voice.

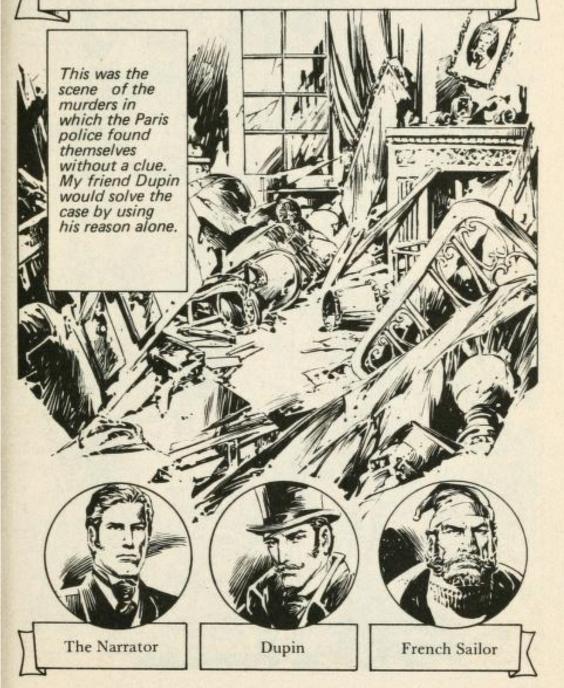








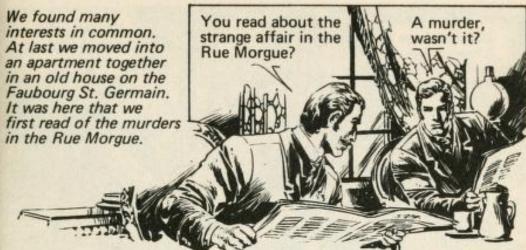


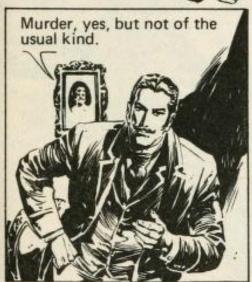




















But the sounds stopped, and all was quiet. The men ran through the house, searching from room to room. At last they came to a large back room on the fourth floor.



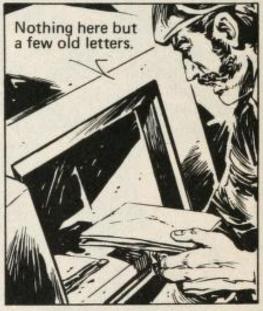


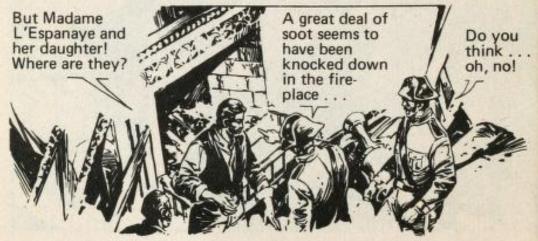


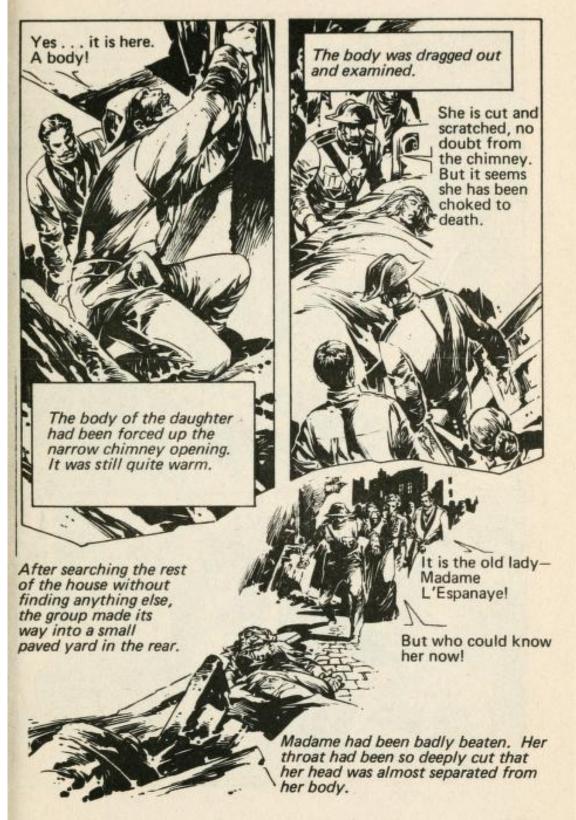














We looked eagerly for the next day's newspapers. Though nothing had been found, an account was given of the people who had been questioned.

There was Pauline Dubourg, a washer-woman.

Yes, I am Pauline Dubourg. I have washed clothes for the L'Espanayes for three years.







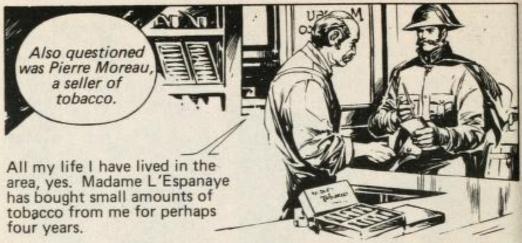


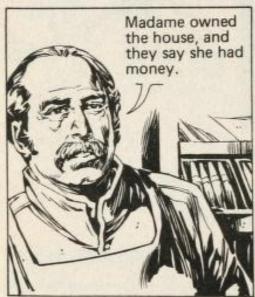


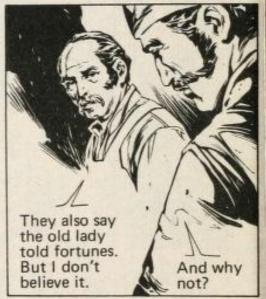


They paid me well, that is all I know! As for what people say, Madame was thought to have some money saved up. I believe she told fortunes for a living.













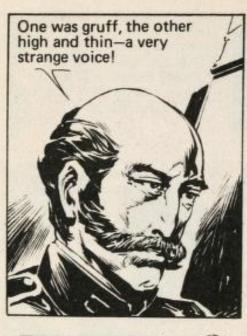
The shutters of the front windows were seldom open. Those in the rear were always closed, except for the one large back room on the fourth floor.



entered the house,



After breaking into the house, I led the way upstairs. Upon reaching the first landing, I heard two voices, loud and angry . . .

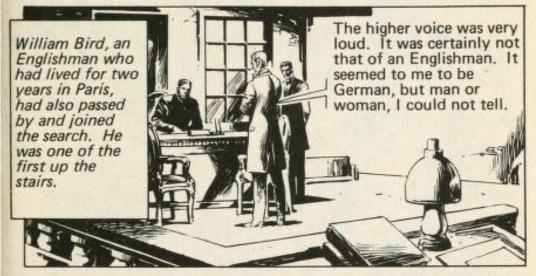


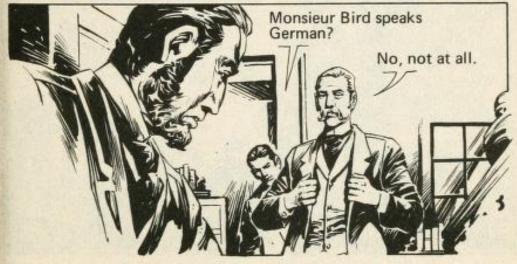


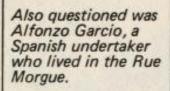






















Jules Mignaud, a banker of the firm of Mignaud et Fils, also spoke to the police.

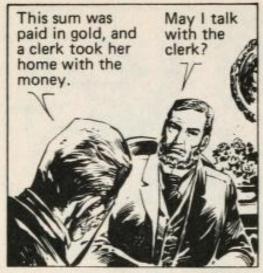




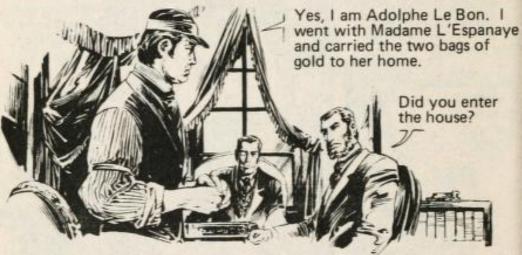
eight years ago. She owned some property.

She took nothing out until three days before her death, when she came for the sum of 4,000 francs.

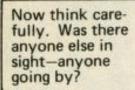












There was no one at all! It is a side street, and very lonely.



I was called in about dawn to view the bodies. That of the young lady was much cut and scraped. That it had been forced up the chimney would account for it.

There were deep scratches below the chin, with a series of spots which must have been the marks of fingers.

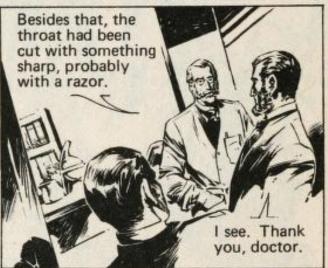


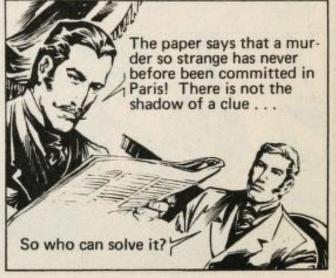


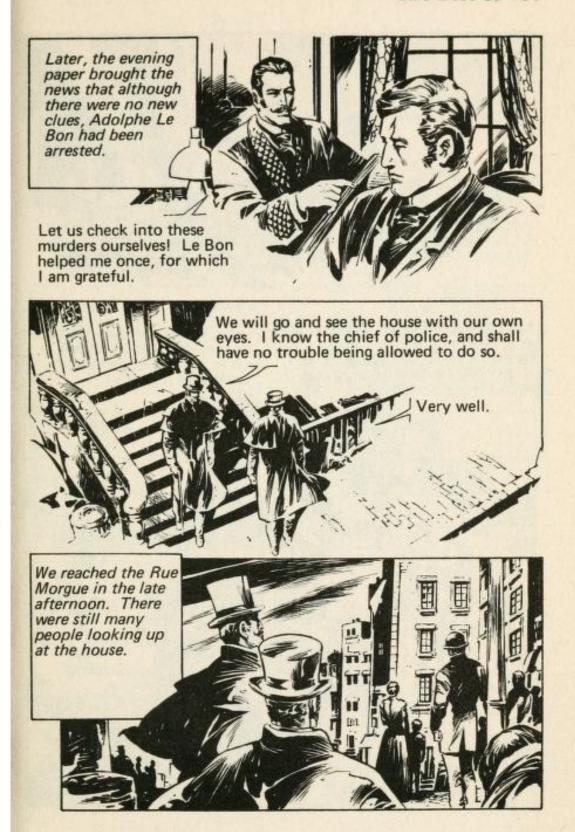


A heavy club, a bar of iron, a chair: such a weapon in the hands of a strong man might have given such results. No woman could have done it.











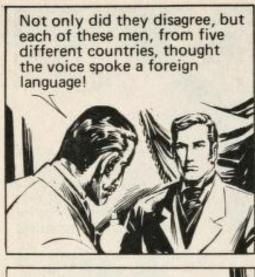
Returning to the front door, we were let in by the police. We went up to the bedroom where the bodies still lay. Dupin looked at everything, including the bodies.

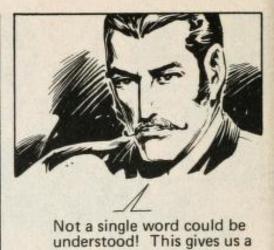
On the way home we stopped at the offices of Le Monde, a daily paper read by sailors and ship's captains.

















In the case of the window behind the bed, some years ago, the nail had been broken in two.
Although it remained in place and looked whole, it no longer held the window shut.



If someone got away through that window, and let it close behind him, the hidden spring would lock the window. Yet it would seem that the nail was doing so!

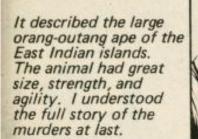


So you have solved that part of it! But how did the killer get down?



A killer who was a good climber could have used the outside shutter to swing himself from the window to the lightning rod. It runs from the roof to the ground nearby. He could have climbed down the rod!

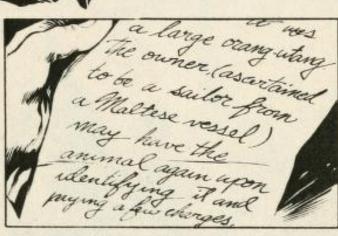




Yes, I see. But what of the second voice, the Frenchman?

I suppose him to be a sailor, the owner of the animal. He must know something of the murders.

Perhaps it got away from him and he followed it. It is probably still loose. I left this advertisement at the newspaper last night. I think it will bring him here.











I have no way of telling—four or five years, perhaps. You have him here?

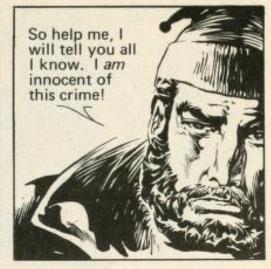


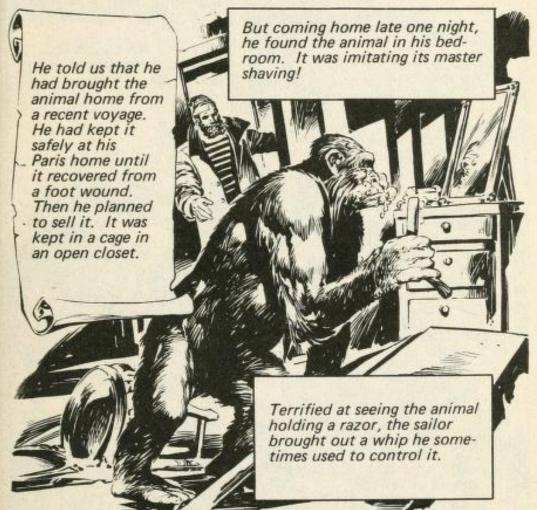
You shall tell me all you know about the murders in the Rue Morgue!

My reward shall be this.

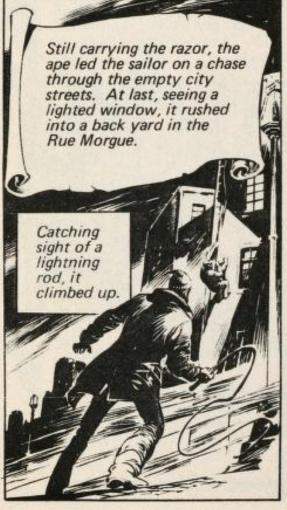
My friend, we mean you no harm. I know you did not kill those women. But an innocent man is now in jail. He is charged with a crime of which you can point out the killer!





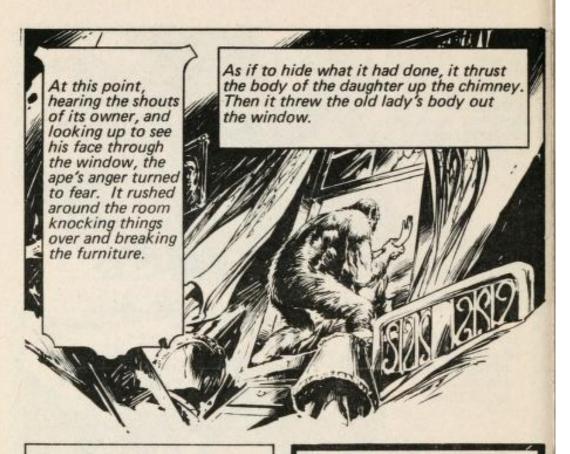












The sailor quickly slid down the rod.



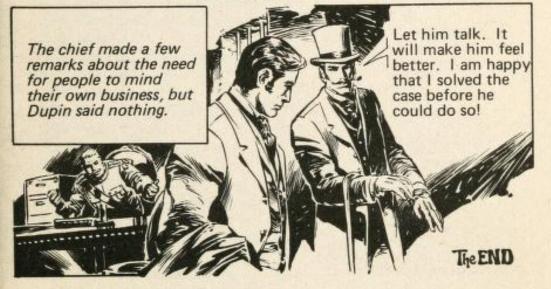
Terrified at what he had seen, he ran home, leaving the orangoutang to its fate. The ape must have left the room just before the door was broken in.

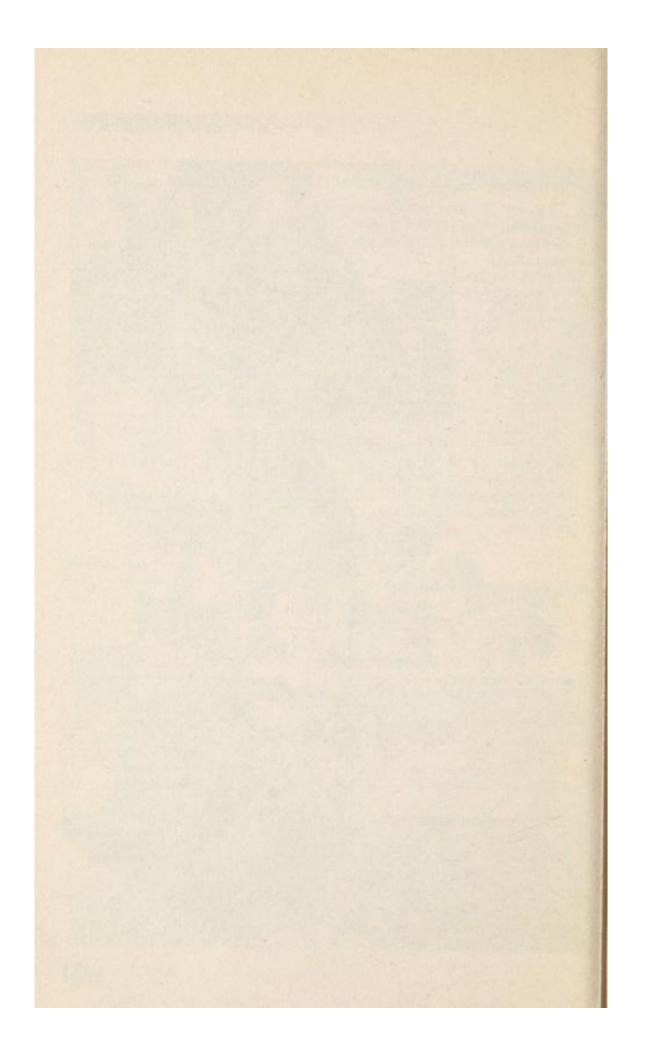


The next day we heard that the orang-outang had been caught. Its owner then sold it for a good sum.









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#### CLASSICS

- C 1 Black Beauty
- C 2 The Call of the Wild
- C 3 Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
- C 4 Dracula
- C 5 Frankenstein
- C 6 Huckleberry Finn
- C 7 Moby Dick
- C 8 The Red Badge of Courage
- C 9 The Time Machine
- C10 Tom Sawyer
- C11 Treasure Island
- C12 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea
- C13 The Great Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
- C14 Gulliver's Travels
- C15 The Hunchback of Notre Dame
- C16 The Invisible Man
- C17 Journey to the Center of the Earth
- C18 Kidnapped
- C19 The Mysterious Island
- C20 The Scarlet Letter
- C21 The Story of My Life
- C22 A Tale of Two Cities
- C23 The Three Musketeers
- C24 The War of the Worlds
- C25 Around the World in Eighty Days
- C26 Captains Courageous
- C27 A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court
- C28 The Hound of the Baskervilles
- C29 The House of the Seven Gables
- C30 Jane Eyre
- C31 The Last of the Mohicans
- C32 The Best of O. Henry
- C33 The Best of Poe
- C34 Two Years Before the Mast
- C35 White Fang
- C36 Wuthering Heights
- C37 Ben Hur
- C38 A Christmas Carol
- C39 The Food of the Gods
- C40 Ivanhoe
- C41 The Man in the Iron Mask
- C42 The Prince and the Pauper
- C43 The Prisoner of Zenda
- C44 The Return of the Native
- C45 Robinson Crusoe
- C46 The Scarlet Pimpernel

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C47 The Sea Wolf

C48 The Swiss Family Robinson

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C52 Great Expectations

C53 Heidi

C54 The Illiad

C55 Lord Jim

C56 The Mutiny on Board H.M.S. Bounty

C57 The Odyssey

C58 Oliver Twist

C59 Pride and Prejudice

C60 The Turn of the Screw

#### SHAKESPEARE

S 1 As You Like It

S 2 Hamlet

S 3 Julius Caesar

S 4 King Lear

S 5 Macbeth

S 6 The Merchant of Venice

S 7 A Midsummer Night's Dream

S 8 Othello

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S11 The Tempest

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